

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEAD AGENCIES

I. INTRODUCTION

The “Lead Agencies” are responsible for NEPA and SEPA compliance for transportation projects. FHWA will be the federal lead agency responsible if FHWA funding or approval is required. The lead agency for SEPA projects is dictated by SEPA; where WSDOT is the project proponent it is normally also the lead agency.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Invite any agency with jurisdiction or expertise to become a cooperating agency. FHWA (or other lead federal agency) will request the participation of any federal agency for joint (FHWA/WSDOT) NEPA/SEPA projects. WSDOT (or the SEPA lead agencies) will request the participation of any state agency for joint NEPA/SEPA or SEPA projects. Provide a detailed project description and enough information for the agencies to estimate what impact the project would have on resources under their jurisdiction or within their area of expertise. The letter of invitation should outline the proposed level of involvement expected of the cooperating agency and explain whether the request is being made because of the agency’s special expertise or its legal jurisdiction.

A request that the COE be a cooperating agency must originate from FHWA. The request must include enough detail for the COE to determine what impact the project has within the COE jurisdiction.

- B. Invite cooperating agencies and signatory agencies to scoping and coordination meetings as early as possible in the project development process.
- C. Obtain concurrence from cooperating agencies and signatory agencies on description of project purpose and need, and criteria for alternative selection.
- D. Prepare summaries of all meetings, including all agreements reached and discussion of pending issues, and distribute the summaries to all cooperating agencies and signatory agencies.
- E. Determine whether it would be desirable to ask the cooperating agencies and signatory agencies to perform and/or use any environmental analysis work or write a portion of the environmental document.

- F. Conduct highway design alternatives meetings and field reviews if necessary.
- G. Include in the pre-draft and subsequent environmental documents, to the greatest extent practicable, the information needed by agencies with jurisdiction by law to grant required permits, certifications, or approvals (including the information needed to initiate/perform the Section 404b(1) public interest review/evaluation). The pre-draft document should also summarize existing plans (for example: land use, Growth Management Plans, and shoreline plans) and zoning regulations applicable to the alternatives being considered, and explain how the alternatives are consistent and inconsistent with them. The pre-draft should identify the preferred alternative, if known.
- H. Give each cooperating agency and signatory agency the opportunity to review the pre-draft and pre-final environmental document and to express their views on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, anticipated impacts, and project compliance with other applicable policies and statutes.
- I. Obtain concurrence from the cooperating agencies and signatory agencies on the project alternatives that were evaluated in the pre-draft and the preliminary preferred alternative, if known.
- J. Prepare and submit applications for appropriate permits.
- K. Consider conducting joint public involvement activities with cooperating agencies and signatory agencies.
- L. Obtain concurrence from the cooperating agencies and signatory agencies on the selected preferred alternative. Include in the final environmental document the information needed by the cooperating agencies to fulfill their responsibilities and requirements on approvals, permits, certifications and/or clearances for the proposed action.